

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing telephony services through the Internet, the method comprising ~~steps of~~:

by a server available through the Internet, communicating with a plurality of hosts, each host being connected to a local phone service via a local phone line and to the server via the Internet, the server communicating with clients through the Internet to provide clients access to local phone services and communications through the local phone lines of the plurality of hosts, wherein the server routes a phone call from a client through the Internet to a host that is in the local area of the destination of the phone call, and the phone call proceeds through the local phone service of the host that is in the local area via the local phone line of the host that is in the local area.

2. (Currently Amended) A server computer accessible through the Internet, the server computer being configured to provide access control to a remote client that accesses phone services and a plurality of phone lines through a plurality of host computers to provide the remote client via the Internet with local phone services and communications through the plurality of phone lines available through the plurality of host computers, wherein the server computer routes a phone call from the remote client through the Internet to a host that is in the local area of the destination of the phone call, and the phone call proceeds through the local phone service of the host that is in the local area via the local phone line of the host that is in the local area.

3. (Previously Presented) The server of claim 2, wherein the server computer is configured to provide one or more of the following services: authentication, tunneling, initiation of peer-to-peer communication, routing, directory, directory search, and access rights.

4. (Currently Amended) A host computer having access to a local phone line that connects to a local phone service and an Internet connection, the host

computer being configured to provide Internet server-enabled access to the local phone line and service via a server that controls access to the host computer and to a plurality of other hosts computers by communication through the local phone line via an internet connection by permitting a client to utilize the local phone service through the local phone line, wherein the host computer routes a server-enabled client phone call having a destination in the host's local phone service from the Internet through the local phone service of the host computer via the local phone line.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The host of claim 4, wherein a server controls client access to the host.

7. (Previously Presented) The host of claim 6, wherein the server is configured to provide one or more of the following services: directory search, voicemail and missed calls, call answering, and call initiation.

8. (Currently Amended) A client device enabled to access a plurality of local phone services of a plurality of host computers connected to the plurality of local phone services via a plurality of local phone lines, the client accessing the plurality of local phone services and phone lines of the plurality of host computers through an Internet connection controlled by a server computer, the client device having functions for requesting access to the local phone service, and for performing communications through an established connection with the local phone services via the local phone lines, wherein the client device requests Internet access from the service to a host that is in the local service of the destination of a phone call and, when the server grants access, the client directs to phone call through the Internet to the host that is in the local service so that the call proceeds through the local phone service of the host that is in the local area via the local phone line of the host that is in the local area.

9. (Previously Presented) The client of claim 8, wherein the client device is configured to provide one or more of the following services: phone line interface, authentication, verification, call forwarding, call answering, voice mail and missed calls, and local-call routing.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for providing phone services to Internet users through the Internet, the system comprising:

a plurality of host computers, each host computer having access to a local phone service through a local phone line; and

at least one server that controls access between said plurality of host computers and phone service clients seeking to access local phone services through the local phone lines of the plurality of host computers through the Internet, wherein the server routes an Internet user phone call through the Internet to a host computer that is in the local area of the destination of the phone call so that the phone call proceeds through the local phone service of the host computer that is in the local area via the local phone line of the host computer that is in the local area.

11. (Currently Amended) A business method, the method comprising charging clients for access through a computer server to a system comprising a plurality of host computers and enabling client computers to access via the Internet the system comprising a plurality of host computers through the computer server, each of the plurality of host computers having access to a local phone service through a local phone line; the computer server controlling client computer access to the plurality of local phone services through the local phone lines; and permitting the access by a client computer upon verification of access rights of the client computer, wherein the server routes an Internet user phone call through the Internet to a host computer that is in the local area of the destination of the phone call so that the phone call proceeds through the local phone service of the host computer that is in the local area via the local phone line of the host computer that is in the local area.

12. (Currently Amended) A business method, the method comprising providing virtual local phone service for a fee by providing a simulation of local phone service and voice communications to remote client devices that access a computer server through the Internet, the computer server providing the simulation of local phone service by controlling access to a plurality of host computers connected to local phone services by a plurality of local phone lines such that a client call from a remote client device is routed through the Internet and a host computer to a destination served by a local phone service of a host computer via the host computer's local phone line.